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housing, a first countercontact that is electrically connected to said load, a second countercontact that is electrically connected to said external terminal, said first and said second countercontact being provided in said cavity, and a housingless temperature-dependent switching mechanism for protecting said load at least from overtemperature or overcurrent, wherein said switching mechanism comprises a bimetallic element and a movable contact element and is inserted into said cavity such that said movable contact element is, when its temperature is below its response temperature, in direct electrical contact with one of said countercontacts so that said switching mechanism electrically interconnects said first and said second countercontact.

29. (New) A device as in claim 28, wherein a cover is provided that sealingly closes off said cavity after said switching mechanism has been set in place.

30. (New) A device as in claim 29, wherein said cover is attached to the device in articulated fashion.

31. (New) A device as in claim 28, wherein said switching mechanism is configured as a lossproof unit.

32. (New) A device as in claim 31, wherein said switching mechanism comprises a spring element that is held in lossproof fashion on a contact element that coacts with the other of said two countercontacts.

33. (New) A device as in claim 28, wherein said switching mechanism is attached to a guide element that is inserted together with said switching mechanism into said cavity.

34. (New) A device as in claim 33, wherein said guide element acts as a cover and closes off said cavity in sealed fashion.

35. (New) A device as in claim 33, wherein one of said two countercontacts is arranged on said guide element.

36. (New) A device as in claim 33, wherein said bimetallic element is configured as a bimetallic tongue that at its first end is attached to said guide element and at its free end carries said movable contact element.

37. (New) A device as in claim 32, wherein said spring element is configured as a spring tongue that at its first end is attached to a guide element that is inserted together with said switching mechanism into said cavity, and at its second end is joined to a first end of said bimetallic element, which at its free end carries said movable contact element.

38. (New) A device as in claim 32, wherein said spring element has a retaining extension piece that is attached to a guide element that is inserted together with said switching mechanism into the cavity.

39. (New) An electrical device comprising an electrical load, a housing, an external terminal for supplying electricity to said load, a cavity provided in said housing, a cover that sealingly closes off the cavity, a first countercontact that is electrically connected to said load, a second countercontact that is electrically connected to said external terminal, wherein one of said countercontacts is arranged on said cover and the other of said countercontacts is provided in said cavity, and a housingless temperature-dependent switching mechanism for protecting said load at least from overtemperature or overcurrent, wherein said switching mechanism comprises a bimetallic element and a movable contact element and is inserted into said cavity such that said movable contact element is, when its temperature is below its response temperature, in direct electrical contact with one of said countercontact so that the switching mechanism electrically interconnects said first and said second countercontact.

40. (New) A device as in claim 39, wherein the cover is attached to the device in articulated fashion.

41. (New) A device as in claim 39, wherein said second countercontact is arranged on said cover.

42. (New) A device as in claim 39, wherein said switching mechanism is configured as a lossproof unit.

43. (New) A device as in claim 42, wherein said switching mechanism comprises a spring element that is held in lossproof fashion on a contact element that coacts with the other of the two countercontacts.

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44. (New) A device as in claim 39, wherein said switching mechanism is attached to a guide element that is inserted together with said switching mechanism into said cavity.

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45. (New) A device as in claim 44, wherein said guide element acts as said cover.

46. (New) A device as in claim 42, wherein said bimetallic element is configured as a bimetallic tongue that at its first end is attached to said guide element and at its free end carries said movable contact element.

47. (New) A device as in claim 43, wherein said spring element is configured as a spring tongue that at its first end is attached to a guide element that is inserted together with said switching mechanism into said cavity, and at its second end is joined to a first end of said bimetallic element, which at its free end carries said movable contact element.

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48. (New) A device as in claim 43, wherein said spring element has a retaining extension piece that is attached to a guide element that is inserted together with said switching mechanism into said cavity.
